Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A substantially pure polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence at least 90% identical to SEQ ID NO:2, wherein the polypeptide induces differentiation of an osteoblast ~~osteocyte~~.

2-4. (Canceled)

7 8. (Original) A substantially pure polypeptide comprising SEQ ID NO:2.

11 6. (Previously Presented) A substantially pure polypeptide comprising SEQ ID NO:1.

15 11. (Currently Amended) A substantially pure polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2 containing up to 30 conservative amino acid substitutions, wherein the polypeptide induces differentiation of an osteoblast ~~osteocyte~~.

22 18. (Currently Amended) A substantially pure polypeptide encoded by a first nucleic acid that hybridizes under stringent conditions (0.2 X SSC and 0.1% SDS at 68°C) to a second nucleic acid consisting of SEQ ID NO:3, wherein the polypeptide induces differentiation of an osteoblast ~~osteocyte~~.

9-40. (Canceled)

16 ~~41~~. (Previously Presented) The polypeptide of claim ~~1~~ 15, wherein the amino acid sequence contains up to 15 conservative amino acid substitutions.

17 ~~42~~. (Previously Presented) The polypeptide of claim ~~1~~ 15, wherein the amino acid sequence contains up to 5 conservative amino acid substitutions.

18 ~~43~~. (Previously Presented) The polypeptide of claim ~~1~~ 15, wherein the amino acid sequence contains up to 3 conservative amino acid substitutions.

2 ~~44~~. (Previously Presented) The polypeptide of claim 1, wherein the amino acid sequence is at least 95% identical to SEQ ID NO:2.

3 ~~45~~. (Previously Presented) The polypeptide of claim 1, wherein the amino acid sequence is at least 99% identical to SEQ ID NO:2.

26 ~~46~~. (Previously Presented) A substantially pure polypeptide consisting of the sequence of SEQ ID NO:1.

27 ~~47~~. (Previously Presented) A substantially pure polypeptide consisting of the sequence of SEQ ID NO:2.

4 ~~48~~. (Previously Presented) A method of screening for a compound that binds to a polypeptide, the method comprising:

providing the polypeptide of claim 1;

contacting a test compound with the polypeptide; and

determining whether the test compound has bound to the polypeptide.

~~49~~ 18. (Previously Presented) A method of screening for a compound that binds to a polypeptide, the method comprising: 17

providing the polypeptide of claim ~~8~~ 1;

contacting a test compound with the polypeptide; and

determining whether the test compound has bound to the polypeptide.

~~50~~ 12. (Previously Presented) A method of screening for a compound that binds to a polypeptide, the method comprising: 11

providing the polypeptide of claim ~~6~~ 8;

contacting a test compound with the polypeptide; and

determining whether the test compound has bound to the polypeptide.

~~51~~ 19. (Previously Presented) A method of screening for a compound that binds to a polypeptide, the method comprising: 15

providing the polypeptide of claim ~~7~~;

contacting a test compound with the polypeptide; and

determining whether the test compound has bound to the polypeptide.

~~52~~ 23. (Previously Presented) A method of screening for a compound that binds to a polypeptide, the method comprising: 22

providing the polypeptide of claim ~~8~~;

contacting a test compound with the polypeptide; and

determining whether the test compound has bound to the polypeptide.

~~53~~ 5. (Currently Amended) A method of screening for a compound that induces ~~osteocyte~~ osteoblast differentiation, the method comprising:

culturing osteoblasts;

providing the polypeptide of claim 1 to said osteoblasts;

contacting a test compound with the polypeptide;

measuring osteoblast differentiation; and

selecting a test compound that increases the ability of the polypeptide to induce ~~osteocyte~~ differentiation compared to the ability of the polypeptide to induce ~~osteocyte~~ differentiation in the absence of the test compound.

9 54. (Currently Amended) A method of screening for a compound that induces ~~osteocyte~~ osteoblast differentiation, the method comprising:

culturing osteoblasts;

providing the polypeptide of claim 7 to said osteoblasts;

contacting a test compound with the polypeptide;

measuring osteoblast differentiation; and

selecting a test compound that increases the ability of the polypeptide to induce ~~osteocyte~~ differentiation compared to the ability of the polypeptide to induce ~~osteocyte~~ differentiation in the absence of the test compound.

13 55. (Currently Amended) A method of screening for a compound that induces ~~osteocyte~~ osteoblast differentiation, the method comprising:

culturing osteoblasts;

providing the polypeptide of claim 11 to said osteoblasts;

contacting a test compound with the polypeptide;

measuring osteoblast differentiation; and

selecting a test compound that increases the ability of the polypeptide to induce ~~osteocyte~~ differentiation compared to the ability of the polypeptide to induce ~~osteocyte~~ differentiation in the absence of the test compound.

20 56. (Currently Amended) A method of screening for a compound that induces ~~osteocyte~~ osteoblast differentiation, the method comprising:

culturing osteoblasts;

providing the polypeptide of claim 1 to said osteoblasts;

contacting a test compound with the polypeptide;

measuring osteoblast differentiation; and

selecting a test compound that increases the ability of the polypeptide to induce ~~osteocyte~~ differentiation compared to the ability of the polypeptide to induce ~~osteocyte~~ differentiation in the absence of the test compound.

24. (Currently Amended) A method of screening for a compound that induces ~~osteocyte~~ osteoblast differentiation, the method comprising:

culturing osteoblasts;

providing the polypeptide of claim 8 to said osteoblasts;

contacting a test compound with the polypeptide;

measuring osteoblast differentiation; and

selecting a test compound that increases the ability of the polypeptide to induce ~~osteocyte~~ differentiation compared to the ability of the polypeptide to induce ~~osteocyte~~ differentiation in the absence of the test compound.

26. (Currently Amended) A method of screening for a compound that inhibits ~~osteocyte~~ osteoblast differentiation, the method comprising:

culturing osteoblasts;

providing the polypeptide of claim 1 to said osteoblasts;

contacting a test compound with the polypeptide;

measuring osteoblast differentiation; and

selecting a test compound that reduces the ability of the polypeptide to induce ~~osteocyte~~ differentiation compared to the ability of the polypeptide to induce ~~osteocyte~~ differentiation in the absence of the test compound.

10 ~~56~~. (Currently Amended) A method of screening for a compound that inhibits ~~osteocyte~~ osteoblast differentiation, the method comprising:

culturing osteoblasts;

providing the polypeptide of claim 7 ~~6~~ to said osteoblasts;

contacting a test compound with the polypeptide;

measuring osteoblast differentiation; and

selecting a test compound that reduces the ability of the polypeptide to induce ~~osteocyte~~ differentiation compared to the ability of the polypeptide to induce ~~osteocyte~~ differentiation in the absence of the test compound.

14 ~~60~~. (Currently Amended) A method of screening for a compound that inhibits ~~osteocyte~~ osteoblast differentiation, the method comprising:

culturing osteoblasts;

providing the polypeptide of claim 11 ~~6~~ to said osteoblasts;

contacting a test compound with the polypeptide;

measuring osteoblast differentiation; and

selecting a test compound that reduces the ability of the polypeptide to induce ~~osteocyte~~ differentiation compared to the ability of the polypeptide to induce ~~osteocyte~~ differentiation in the absence of the test compound.

21 ~~61~~. (Currently Amended) A method of screening for a compound that inhibits ~~osteocyte~~ osteoblast differentiation, the method comprising:

culturing osteoblasts;

providing the polypeptide of claim 15 ~~7~~ to said osteoblasts;

contacting a test compound with the polypeptide;

measuring osteoblast differentiation; and

selecting a test compound that reduces the ability of the polypeptide to induce ~~osteocyte~~ differentiation compared to the ability of the polypeptide to induce ~~osteocyte~~ differentiation in the absence of the test compound.

~~62.~~ (Currently Amended) A method of screening for a compound that inhibits ~~osteocyte~~ osteoblast differentiation, the method comprising:

culturing osteoblasts;

providing the polypeptide of claim ~~8~~ to said osteoblasts;

contacting a test compound with the polypeptide;

measuring osteoblast differentiation; and

selecting a test compound that reduces the ability of the polypeptide to induce ~~osteocyte~~ differentiation compared to the ability of the polypeptide to induce ~~osteocyte~~ differentiation in the absence of the test compound.